



March 30, 2000

# Monterey Peninsula Unified School District

700 Pacific Street P.O. Box 1031 Monterey, CA 93942-1031

Joe C. Tacker, Foreman  
1999 Monterey County Grand Jury  
P.O. Box 414  
Salinas, CA 93902

Dear Foreman Tacker:

The following is in response to the final report of the 1999 Monterey County Grand Jury Report:

## **Recommendation #1:**

### Superintendent's Response

As a point of information, the Education Code specifies the parameters that school districts can evaluate certificated personnel. Therefore, the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District does not use STAR results to evaluate assignment of staff. Attached is an excerpt from our Certificated Master Contract that deals with evaluation.

### Board's Response

Using STAR results to evaluate assignment of personnel is a bad idea now and perhaps even in the future. The state standards are not aligned with the test and the test is not testing what is in the curriculum. Until this is corrected, we would not be evaluating people fairly. Also, California is the only state that is testing English Language Learners with STAR and including their scores with other students. This is wrong. The Grand Jury should also know that the STAR test is normed on a population of students that does not match the student population in California. The question the Grand Jury asks only further exasperates the problem.

## **Recommendation #2**

### Superintendent's Response

The Monterey Peninsula Unified School District makes every effort to hire fully credentialed certificated teachers through a variety of ways, including but not limited to recruiting locally, state-wide and nationally. We also work collaboratively with CSUMB and other colleges and universities in an attempt to increase the job pool of teachers. Our student teacher program is excellent and has been quite successful for a number of years. It should be noted that there is a shortage of qualified teachers throughout the state and nation-wide. This shortage is not unique to Monterey County. I believe the cost of living in our area and low average teacher's salary contributes to our difficulty in hiring teachers, particularly in certain subject areas such as bilingual, special education, math and science. Attached is a breakdown of the staffing procedure currently used to fill certificated vacancies, including the total number by credential category.

## **Recommendation #3**

### Superintendent's Response

As part of its 2000/01 budget reductions, the Board of Education voted unanimously to forego their stipends and fringe benefits program.

**Board's Response**

Firstly, no one seeks office on a school board because of benefits. No one knows there are some benefits until after they are in office. The benefit which the Grand Jury is concerned about is very small in comparison to the time, burden and responsibility board members have to carry in making decisions. Board members are pulled away from their jobs and families to carry out their duties for the district. This is done sometimes at financial sacrifice for some board members. In a two-year period of time, one board president lost an estimated \$30,000 of income from his business because of time spent on school district business.

Secondly, the Grand Jury is implying through its question that it does not favor a democracy in which everyone may have an opportunity to serve. The benefits provided could defray costs for someone who would otherwise find it a great financial burden to serve on the board. Is the Grand Jury suggesting that only individuals with financial means serve on school boards? Should only retired persons serve on school boards? What group of people does the Grand Jury want to eliminate? Perhaps others should search their collective conscience.

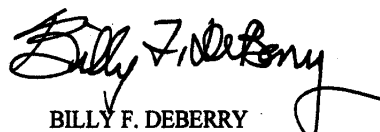
Thirdly, almost every other board and commission in the state, counties and cities provide some sort of compensation to its members. City councils also receive benefits. The Planning Commission for the City of Monterey receives a benefit as does junior college trustees and county school board members. Why are these benefits provided? Because all these bodies recognize the time commitment involved in giving public service. It is not an easy job. They all recognize that the benefit is small in comparison to the time and responsibility involved.

**Recommendation #4****Superintendent's Response**

The Monterey Peninsula Unified School District has a very strong program at each site to prevent crime and vandalism. We use the California Safe Schools Assessment reporting procedure to document and monitor school crime and incidents of vandalism by students and non-students. The data is incorporated into school site safety plans designed with the assistance of local law enforcement to decrease school crime and vandalism. We have an exemplary School Resource Officer Program with the cities of Marina, Monterey and Seaside and a partnership with the Monterey County Probation Department to provide on-campus probation officers to assist in student-discipline issues. In addition, we have policies and procedures which support our efforts in the areas of crime and vandalism prevention. Attached for your information is a copy of our emergency procedures bulletin that I thought you might find quite informative.

I sincerely hope you find the above information helpful. If I can provide further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

  
BILLY F. DEBERRY  
Superintendent

BFD/es  
Attachments